

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ANKARA 04157 01 OF 02 011542Z POSS DUPE
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USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES

USDOCOLANDSOUTHEAST IZMIR

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AMCONSUL ADANA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMCONSUL IZMIR

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 ANKARA 4157

NOFORN - MILITARY ADDRESSEES HANDLE AS SPECAT

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: MARR, TU, UR

SUBJECT: PROSPECTS FOR TURKISH-SOVIET MILITARY COOPERATION

REF: A) ANKARA 3461 (DTG 051240Z MAY 78), B) ANKARA 3441

(DTG 050515Z MAY 78), C) ANKARA 3321 (DTG 281318Z APR 78),

D) ANKARA 2536 (DTG 041510Z APR 78) (NOTAL), E) POLITICAL

REPORTING PLAN FOR TURKEY

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PAGE 02 ANKARA 04157 01 OF 02 011542Z POSS DUPE

1. SUMMARY. THE APRIL 25-28 VISIT OF THE SOVIET CHIEF OF
GENERAL STAFF TO TURKEY FOCUSED ATTENTION ON THE PROSPECTS
FOR TURKISH-SOVIET MILITARY COOPERATION AND ON IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE ECEVIT GOVERNMENT'S "NEW DEFENSE CONCEPT." THE
CONVERGENCE OF THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION'S EFFORTS TO PERSUADE
CONGRESS TO REPEAL THE ARMS EMBARGO, THE WASHINGTON NATO
SUMMIT AND THE GOT'S REVIEW OF ITS FOREIGN POLICY OPTIONS

HAVE RAISED THE IMPORTANT QUESTION OF HOW FAR TURKEY CAN OR WILL MOVE IN EXPANDING RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND WHETHER SOME FORM OF MILITARY COOPERATION IS FEASIBLE. WHILE THERE ARE MANY IN THE TURKISH MILITARY AND IN THE TURKISH BODY POLITIC WHO WOULD VIEW ANY MOVE TOWARD A TURKISH-SOVIET RAPPROCHEMENT WITH GREAT SUSPICION, THE GOT MAY FIND ITSELF INCLINED IN THAT DIRECTION IF ITS TIES TO THE NATO ALLIANCE AND WEST GENERALLY ARE LOOSENEED, WHETHER BECAUSE THE U.S. ARMS EMBARGO IS CONTINUED, THE WEST (INCLUDING THE U.S.) FAILS TO RESPOND ADEQUATELY TO TURKISH APPEALS FOR MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, OR BECAUSE TURKISH "NATIONAL" SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS, NOTABLY THE PERCEIVED THREATS FROM GREECE AND PERHAPS DOMESTIC INSURGENCY, DICTATE A TRIMMING OF TURKEY'S NATO COMMITMENT. IN THE SHORT-TERM, THE TURKS CAN TAKE A NUMBER OF "MINI-STEPS", INCLUDING VISITS OF SOVIET WARSHIPS TO TURKISH PORTS AND INCREASED RECIPROCAL VISITS OF MILITARY PERSONNEL, TO SET A NEW TONE IN TURKISH-SOVIET MILITARY RELATIONS. MORE INTENSIVE COOPERATION, PRINCIPALLY INVOLVING ARMS ACQUISITIONS FROM THE USSR, WOULD TAKE SOMEWHAT LONGER TO DEVELOP, BUT COULD INCLUDE TRANSFERS OF TRANSPORT VEHICLES, SURFACE -TO-AIR MISSILES, MEDIUM-RANGE TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT, HELICOPTERS AND LIGHT FIXED-WING AIRCRAFT, AND SMALL-BORE WEAPONS PLUS SOVIET ASSISTANCE TO TURKISH DEFENSE INDUSTRIES. END SUMMARY.

2. ALTHOUGH MANY OF THE SPECIFICS OF THE ECEVIT GOVERNMENT'S "NEW DEFENSE CONCEPT" HAVE NOT BEEN FORMULATED OR AT LEAST
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SECRET

PAGE 03 ANKARA 04157 01 OF 02 011542Z POSS DUPE

ARTICULATED PUBLICLY, TWO OF ITS CARDINAL POINTS ARE TO DIVERSIFY THE SOURCES OF ARMS SUPPLY FOR THE TURKISH ARMED FORCES AND TO PROCEED WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INDIGENOUS ARMS INDUSTRY. THESE POINTS ARE NOT NEW TO THE ECEVIT GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER, AS ITS PREDECESSOR DEMIREL GOVERNMENT DECLARED THE GOT'S INTENTIONS TO ACCOMPLISH THE SAME OBJECTIVES. (NOTE: FOR A REVIEW OF THE TURKISH ARMS ACQUISITIONS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES AND DEFENSE INDUSTRIAL CAPABILITIES, PLEASE SEE ANKARA 8846, DTG 060930Z DEC 77, NOTAL.) IF THE ARMS EMBARGO IS NOT REPEALED BY CONGRESS AND IF THE NATO ALLIES DO NOT RESPOND TO TURKEY'S STATED NEEDS FOR MILITARY HARDWARE AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, IT IS LIKELY THAT TURKISH EFFORTS TO ACQUIRE ARMAMENTS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES, POSSIBLY INCLUDING EASTERN BLOC NATIONS, WILL INTENSIFY AND EXPAND BEYOND WEST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. PRESUMABLY THESE ARMS WOULD NOT BE FOR USE AGAINST WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES, BUT AGAINST GREECE OR DOMESTIC INSURGENTS.

3. THE VISIT OF THE CHIEF OF THE SOVIET GENERAL STAFF, MARSHAL NIKOLAI OGARKOV, TO TURKEY IN LATE APRIL (REFS A, B, AND C) HAS HEIGHTENED PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPECULATION THAT THE GOT MAY MOVE TOWARD NOT ONLY MORE HOSPITABLE RELATIONS

WITH THE SOVIET UNION IN MILITARY AFFAIRS, BUT ALSO A MILITARY AID AND ARMS PROCUREMENT RELATIONSHIP. INDEED, BOTH PUBLIC AND INTELLIGENCE SOURCES HAVE IN RECENT MONTHS INDICATED THAT THE TURKISH GENERAL STAFF AND A SPECIAL GROUND TASK FORCE UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF SENATOR MUHSIN BATUR, A FORMER AIR FORCE COMMANDER, HAVE BEEN STUDYING THE POSSIBILITIES OF INTEGRATING NON-U.S. AND NON-NATO STANDARD EQUIPMENT INTO THE ARMED FORCES. IN THIS RESPECT, THE TURKS HAVE SHOWN MORE THAN CASUAL INTEREST IN THE PAKISTANI AND YUGOSLAV EXPERIENCES OF UTILIZING MILITARY EQUIPMENT FROM BOTH EASTERN AND WESTERN SOURCES.

4. DURING HIS VISIT, OGARKOV BROADLY OFFERED SOVIET MILITARY COOPERATION WITH TURKEY AND INDICATED THAT THE USSR WOULD BE
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 ANKARA 04157 01 OF 02 011542Z POSS DUPE

PREPARED TO HELP THE TURKISH ARMED FORCES, "WITHIN ITS CAPABILITIES" IN UNSPECIFIED AREAS. WE HAVE HEARD FROM MILITARY AND OTHER SOURCES THAT NO CONCRETE PROPOSALS WERE MADE BY EITHER SIDE REGARDING MILITARY AID AND ARMS PROCUREMENT, BUT VISITS OF SOVIET WARSHIPS TO TURKISH PORTS AND INCREASED MILITARY VISITS, INCLUDING SPORTS COMPETITION, ARE POSSIBLE (USDAO IR 6-898-0311-78, DTG 121150Z MAY 78, NOTAL).

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PAGE 01 ANKARA 04157 02 OF 02 011738Z
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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 ANKARA 4157

NOFORN - MILITARY ADDRESSEES HANDLE AS SPECAT

LIMDIS

ADDITIONALLY, TURKISH DEFENSE MINISTER HASAN ESAT ISIK, COMMENTING ON THE RESULTS OF OGARKOV'S VISIT ON APRIL 29, HELD OUT THE PROSPECT FOR INCREASED TURKISH-SOVIET CONTACTS IN THE MILITARY FIELD (PARA 2, REF B). (NOTE: FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IN THIS REGARD, PLEASE SEE RCI 13907, DTG 191452Z MAY 78). AT LITTLE OR NO DOMESTIC POLITICAL COST AND AS A FURTHER SIGNAL TO THE SOVIETS FOR A CLOSER MILITARY RELATIONSHIP, THE TURKS COULD INCREASE THE NUMBER OF INVITATIONS FOR SOVIET ANDDD EASTERN OFFICERS TO OBSERVE MILITARY EXERCISES, LOOSEN UP
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PAGE 02 ANKARA 04157 02 OF 02 011738Z

ATTACHE TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS (THE TURKS HAVE ALREADY DONE SO FOR THE BULGARIANS), INITIATE RECIPROCAL VISITS OF DELEGATIONS IN THE MILITARY INDUSTRIAL FIELD, AND MUTUALLY AGREE TO DECREASE ACTIVE BORDER PATROLS AND OTHER SURVEILLANCE. IF, DURING PRIME MINISTER ECEVIT'S VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION BEGINNING JUNE 21, SOME TYPE OF "POLITICAL DOCUMENT" IS AGREED TO, IT MAY BE POSSIBLE FOR THE ECEVIT GOVERNMENT TO PURSUE SUCH MEASURES AND TO DEVELOP A SET OF TURKISH-SOVIET "CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES" FOR THE BORDER REGION.

5. PRIME MINISTER ECEVIT HAS ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS SOUGHT TO DAMPEN SPECULATION THAT TURKEY INTENDS TO ENTER INTO AN ARMS PROCUREMENT RELATIONSHIP WITH THE USSR BY STATING, AS HE DID IN A "NEW YORK TIMES" INTERVIEW PUBLISHED ON MAY 30, THAT TURKEY WOULD NOT OBTAIN ARMS FROM THE SOVIET UNION BECAUSE THE TWO COUNTRIES ARE MEMBERS OF DIFFERENT DEFENSE ALLIANCES. NEVERTHELESS, IF THE MATERIAL NEEDS OF THE TURKISH ARMED FORCES CANNOT BE MET FROM NATO SOURCES, COMMERCIAL PROCUREMENT, OR THROUGH AGREEMENTS WITH NON-WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES, ARMS PROCUREMENT FROM THE USSR WOULD BECOME MORE ATTRACTIVE, ESPECIALLY IF GRANT AID, EASY PAYMENT OR BARTER TERMS WERE OFFERED. A POSSIBLE HARBINGER IN THIS RESPECT MAY BE SEEN IN TURKISH PROCUREMENT OF YAK-40 AIRCRAFT, HELICOPTERS, HEAVY-DUTY GROUND TRANSPORT EQUIPMENT AND HOVERCRAFT UNDER THE TERMS OF THE TURKISH-SOVIET TRADE PROTOCOL SIGNED ON APRIL 5, 1978 (REF D). ALTHOUGH SUCH PROCUREMENT

WOULD ESSENTIALLY BE FOR CIVILIAN ECONOMIC PURPOSES, THE TURKISH ARMED FORCES WOULD HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO EVALUATE SUCH EQUIPMENT FOR THEIR DEFENSE NEEDS WITHOUT HAVING TO ENTER INTO A FORMAL MILITARY AGREEMENT WITH THE SOVIETS.

6. IF A MILITARY AID OR PROCUREMENT ARRANGEMENT WITH THE SOVIET UNION BECOMES POLITICALLY POSSIBLE AND THE HARDWARE

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PAGE 03 ANKARA 04157 02 OF 02 011738Z

REQUIREMENTS OF THE TURKISH ARMED FORCES CANNOT BE MET ELSEWHERE, THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT MIGHT BE RELATIVELY ASSIMILABLE INTO TURKISH INVENTORIES AND WOULD MEET PRESSING REQUIREMENTS:
--GROUND TRANSPORT VEHICLES, INCLUDING JEEPS, TRUCKS AND ARMORED VEHICLE TRANSPORTERS;
--BRIDGING AND ENGINEER EQUIPMENT;
--SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILES;
--MEDIUM-RANGE TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT;
-- OBSERVER AND UTILITY HELICOPTERS AND LIGHT FIXED-WING AIRCRAFT;
--SMALL-BORE WEAPONS, INCLUDING PISTOLS AND AUTOMATIC WEAPONS (WHICH COULD BE USED BY TURKISH POLICE, AND THE PARA-MILITARY JANDARMA AS WELL AS THE GROUND FORCES).

7. NO DOUBT, MANY IN THE TURKISH MILITARY WOULD HAVE STRONG RESERVATIONS ABOUT INCORPORATING SUCH ITEMS INTO ARMED FORCES' INVENTORIES BECAUSE OF THEIR UNFAMILIARITY WITH SOVIET EQUIPMENT AND THE CONSEQUENT EROSION OF EQUIPMENT STANDARDIZATION, NOT TO MENTION THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF OBTAINING ARMS FROM THE EAST. HOWEVER, IF FACED WITH A NUMBER OF UNSATISFACTORY OPTIONS AND CONSTRAINED BY THE SCARCITY OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE FOR DIRECT PURCHASES, TURKISH MILITARY LEADERS COULD WELL ACQUIESCE IN PROCUREMENT FROM THE EASTERN BLOC IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN MINIMUM LEVELS OF COMBAT PROFICIENCY.

8. ANOTHER TOPIC FREQUENTLY MENTIONED IN RELATION TO THE OGARKOV VISIT IS SOVIET ASSISTANCE TO TURKISH DEFENSE INDUSTRIES AND, WITH SOVIET HELP, THE POSSIBLE LOCAL PRODUCTION OF SPARE PARTS FOR U.S.-ORIGIN EQUIPMENT. IT IS NOT INCONCEIVABLE THAT, WITH SOVIET TECHNOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE, THE TURKS COULD FABRICATE SPARE PARTS FOR M-47 AND M-48 TANKS, AS WELL AS A NUMBER OF LESS-SOPHISTICATED ITEMS SUCH AS COMBAT RADIOS THAT WOULD BE COMPATIBLE WITH U.S.-SUPPLIED ITEMS ALREADY IN TURKISH INVENTORIES. SUCH PROJECTS WOULD BE LONG-RANGE,

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PAGE 04 ANKARA 04157 02 OF 02 011738Z

AND WOULD REQUIRE A LEVEL OF LOCAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT THAT WOULD STRAIN FURTHER THE ALREADY SERIOUS DOMESTIC ECONOMIC SITUATION. MORE ACHIEVABLE, PERHAPS, WOULD BE THE TRANSFER OF SOVIET KNOW-HOW IN THE FIELD OF ROCKET PROPELLANTS, CONVENTIONAL MUNITIONS, FUSE DESIGN, AND SMALL-BORE AMMUNITION TO EXISTING TURKISH INDUSTRIAL PLANTS AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS (SEE ALSO PARA 4(C), ANKARA 8846). AT THIS POINT, HOWEVER, IT CANNOT BE DETERMINED WHETHER IT WOULD BE PRACTICAL FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE TURKISH INDUSTRIAL AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS CONCERNED TO RE-GEAR THEIR EFFORTS TO A SOVIET TECHNOLOGY (ALSO TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE LANGUAGE PROBLEM) OR WHETHER THE SOVIETS ARE INDEED INTERESTED IN SUCH VENTURES.

9. CONCLUSION: THE DIRECTIONS AND PACE WITH WHICH TURKISH-SOVIET MILITARY RELATIONSHIPS DEVELOP PROBABLY DEPENDS IN LARGE PART ON THE DEGREE TO WHICH TURKISH NEEDS ARE FILLED BY THE WEST, INCLUDING REPEAL OF THE U.S. ARMS EMBARGO AND ASSISTANCE FROM OTHER NATO ALLIES, AND ON THE NEED, AS PERCEIVED DOMESTICALLY, FOR TURKEY TO MAINTAIN ITS GENERAL WESTERN ORIENTATION. SHOULD OTHER FOREIGN POLICY OPTIONS BECOME MORE DESIRABLE --AS DETERMINED BY TURKISH PERCEPTIONS OF THE VALUE OF WESTERN TIES, "NATIONAL" AS OPPOSED TO ALLIANCE COMMON DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS, PRESSURE FROM GREECE, AND THE POTENTIAL AND OFTEN-STATED ROLE OF TURKEY AS A "BRIDGE" BETWEEN EAST AND WEST --THE ATTRACTIONS OF EXPANDED MILITARY RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND OTHER WARSAW PACT NATIONS COULD WELL BECOME GREATER, TOGETHER WITH THE LIKELIHOOD OF AN ARMS PROCUREMENT AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP.

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